



Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention (CDC)  
Atlanta, GA 30333

March 13, 2014

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin  
Governor of West Virginia  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Governor Tomblin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the West Virginia Elk River 4-methylcyclohexane methanol (MCHM) release. You requested that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or its partners, immediately conduct further toxicological and/or epidemiologic studies and address ongoing population surveillance.

At the National Institutes of Health, the National Toxicology Program (NTP) is an interagency program whose mission is to evaluate agents of public health concern by developing and applying tools of modern toxicology and molecular biology. More information is available at [ntp.niehs.nih.gov](http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov). CDC has worked closely with the NTP in responding to the MCHM spill.

At West Virginia's request, CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) sent an Epi-Aid response team to review medical records, survey hospitals, assess disaster epidemiology capacity, and make recommendations. This Epi-Aid review is still underway in close collaboration with West Virginia authorities. We are working jointly with state health officials to release the results as quickly as possible.

CDC's National Center for Environmental Health/ATSDR Acting Director, Dr. Tanja Popovic, has been in regular communication with the West Virginia Commissioner and State Health Officer, Dr. Letitia Tierney. CDC is working with Dr. Tierney to execute a Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response. This public health and emergency management survey provides public health officials with reliable information on the needs of the affected population and how to assist in recovery and future preparedness.

On the basis of what we know about the chemicals involved, the duration of any exposures, and the water sampling data that we have reviewed, we do not believe that long-term health impacts related to this event are likely. However, to make sure West Virginia's health authorities are in the best position possible to assess any potential health consequences that may arise, CDC will continue to work with Dr. Tierney's office to strengthen and use existing capacity (e.g., birth defects surveillance, cancer registries, and health system data) to expedite efforts to track and identify any potential population effects.



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While supporting the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, we will continue to learn more and will consult with our counterparts at the federal, state, and local levels as new information becomes available. This response is also being sent to the cosigner of your letter.

Sincerely,

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Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH  
Director, CDC, and  
Administrator, ATSDR

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The Honorable Karen L. Bowling  
Secretary of Department of Health  
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One Davis Square, Suite 100 East  
Charleston, West Virginia 25301

Dear Madam Secretary:

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